

[Folklore of Newspaperdom]

[?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Levi Hubert

ADDRESS 353 W. 118 St. New York

DATE December 10, 1938

SUBJECT FOLKLORE OF NEWSPAPERDOM

1. Date and time of interview Collected over a period of time by the staff-writer
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER LEVI HUBERT

ADDRESS 353 W. 118th St. New York

DATE December 10, 1938

SUBJECT FOLKLORE OF NEWSPAPERDOM

The City Editor gave an assignment to a green reporter who had been boasting of his college training the few days that he had been a member of the news staff.

The assignment was coverage of a scheduled excursion for several hundred children on one of the river boats, and the editor expected a routine story with heart interest so it was the sort of story usually handed out to cub reporters.

About 11 o'clock the cub reporter called the editor and said that he was at the waterfront but that there was no story to hand in because the excursion had been postponed.

Asked the reason why, the reporter answered that because of an explosion in the ship's boilers which had killed and injured over a hundred of the children, the postponement was necessary and so - no story.

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Obviously the same story but with a different setting, is the one going the rounds of the newspaper city rooms which substitutes a society wedding at which the bridegroom fails to show up and although the wedding was at high noon, the reporter nonchalantly phones

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in around six o'clock that there was no story, the missing bridegroom not turning up — spoiling what would have been a swell story.

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Then there is that old tear jerker related to cub reporters while attempting to instill a respect for newspaper tradition in beginners.

Over the ticker comes a story from City News Association about a traffic accident. The city editor called to one of the desk men, "Hey, Murphy, do a re-write on this yarn about a little girl killed by a hit-and-run driver up in the Bronx."

Murphy took down the details. A young girl, on her way home from school, while crossing the street, hit and run over by a speeding driver who didn't stop to ascertain the damage done. Name and address, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs.—, student at P. S. 68.

Murphy finished the story, walked to the editor's desk, laid the copy in the basket, and said, "Chief, May I go home now? You see, that was my little girl who was killed."

Again, there is the one about a fellow named Chapin, city editor of The World, who had suspected his wife of unfaithfulness. One day he broke into a hotel room and found his wife and another man in what is called a "compromising position."

Chapin shot and killed them both, then walked back to the Pulitzer Building and telephoned the Homicide Squad. While waiting for the police to arrive, he told the press room to tear out the front page and prepare to replate. Then he sat down at his typewriter and wrote a scare head:

CITY EDITOR SLAYS UNFAITHFUL WIFE, OTHER MAN

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and under it instructions to the printers—48 point type, eight column spread. then he began:

Shortly after noon today, Charles Chapin, city editor of The World, shot and killed his wife and another man in a hotel bedroom when he found them in a compromising position.

Then he went back to his office and wrote the story of the murder while waiting for the police to arrest him.